

Family Worship Guide – Week 46

READ

Over the next couple of weeks, we will be studying the third chapter of Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus. This week we will focus on Ephesians 3:1-13. In these verses, Paul reminds us that God has chosen to glorify himself through the church. The church glorifies God as we declare the gospel of Jesus.

Read Ephesians 3:1-3.

Paul begins by reminding the Ephesians that God has revealed the mystery of the gospel to him. He calls himself a “steward.” As steward is someone who has been given something to use for a particular purpose. If your parents give you some money to buy a Christmas present for someone, you are a steward of that money. You are responsible to buy that person a Christmas present. When Paul talks about the “stewardship of God’s grace that was given to” him, he is saying that God gave him the gospel SO THAT he could preach it to the Gentiles (3:3). He is responsible to preach the gospel to them.

Read Ephesians 3:4-6.

In verses 4-6, Paul tells us what he means by the “mystery of Christ.” This mystery was hidden in the Old Testament, but now it has been made clear by the Holy Spirit. Imagine that you are in a dark room filled with all kinds of gifts. When it is dark, you cannot see the gifts very well. That is what the Old Testament was like. God had promised to bless all nations through a descendent of Abraham (Genesis 12:3), but the people living in Old Testament times could not see clearly how it would happen. But now that Jesus has come and has sent the Holy Spirit, he turns on the light and shows us what was in the room all along.

The mystery that the Spirit shows us is that Jews and Gentiles are “fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” God is fulfilling his promise to bless all nations through the seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:3), and now Jewish and Gentile believers form one new family known as the church.

Read Ephesians 3:7-13.

In these verses, we see the ultimate purpose behind this mystery. God had chosen to reveal this mystery to Paul, so that he could preach the gospel to the Gentiles, so that Christ might build his church from all nations. And the purpose for all of this is “so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (3:10).” That is the purpose behind everything that God does in salvation – to build a church from all nations, so that he might receive great glory through it.

Questions:

Paul saw himself as a steward of the gospel. He realized that God had given him the gospel so that he could share it with others. God has also given us the gospel. Who does he want you to share it with?

How can you participate in God’s plan to build a church for his glory from among all nations?

Bottom Line: God displays his glory by building his church from all nations.

PRAY

This week, we have been studying Ephesians 3:1-13. We have seen how God is glorifying himself through building a church made up of people from all nations. In light of this reality spend some time thanking God that he has included you in his redeemed people and that he now sends you out with his message of salvation to all nations. Pray that we here at Brook Hills would be faithful stewards of the gospel that has been given to us by declaring and displaying it in Birmingham and in all nations.

SING

This week we are singing “We The Redeemed” written by Jill McClohy. As we sing we celebrate the fact that Christ has redeemed us from sin and darkness. Through His sacrifice on the cross we have been purchased and made heirs with Christ for the glory of God the Father. We sing “glorious glorious One, You have saved us, Honor and power and praise to the Savior, You are the Answer”, and we find hope knowing that he will build his church as his gospel will be proclaimed among all nations.

MEMORIZE

Ephesians 3:10—“...so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions, and any other means necessary, to help their children discover the truths of God’s word and worship Him together.

Preschool

- Before you begin: gather your Bible and prepare to write messages with soap on a steamy mirror in the bathroom.
- Read Ephesians 3:3-7 with your child.
- Now use the soap to write a message on a mirror (ex. “Jesus loves me, God is good, God loves us”) and when the mirror steams from the shower, the message will appear.
- Then say, “God told Paul a wonderful message. This message was something that people who lived in other times didn’t know. Paul found out God’s message that Jews and non-Jews can share together in His plan for his people. The even bigger message is that all people can be part of God’s family if they believe in Jesus as their Savior. He loves us so much that He sent His only son, Jesus, from heaven to earth to save us. He sent Jesus for all of the people in the whole wide world. God wants all people and all races and ethnic backgrounds to know about Jesus.”
- Explain to your child that God wants all of us who know Jesus and how He was sent to save us, to tell others about Him. God wants all nations to hear about His love too. When we tell others about Jesus, we are doing what God wants us to do.
- Who could you share God’s message with this week? Conclude by praying that God will help you share His message about Jesus to others.

Children

- While the call to glorify God by multiplying disciples is simple in one sense, it may be difficult for children to make this truth fully concrete. Use the following object lesson to help bring definition and clarity to the truth that God receives glory as the gospel is communicated, persons from all nations trust in Christ, and thus more worshippers are raised up to bring glory to the one, true God.
 - On a poster board or large sheet of paper, list the names of each member of the family that has trusted in Christ and draw a dot beside each name. Remind your children that you have each been entrusted with the gospel for a purpose – and that is to bring glory to God by multiplying this gospel in the lives of others.
 - Draw lines down from each dot to two additional new dots. This is to illustrate what would happen if each follower of Christ in the family were used by God to reach two additional persons with the gospel. The total number of dots on the poster should now be double the number of Christ-followers in the family.
 - Repeat the process of doubling the total number of dots on the poster to see how gospel multiplication can occur.
 - Ask how many Christ followers were there at the start of the project. How many are there now? How would it bring more glory and honor to God as more and more people are reached with the Gospel and become worshippers of Him?
- Think together as a family about the circles of influence God has entrusted you into, especially extended family, neighbors, classmates, teammates, etc., and list specific names of those with whom you interact regularly that do not know Christ.
- Pray for opportunities in the coming week to share the truth of the gospel with them and ask that your family would be used to build the church.

Students

- Read Ephesians 3:1-13 a few times aloud as a family.
- What was the “mystery” hidden from in the past? (Answer in v. 5 – sons of men in other generations before Paul) Parents – read Hebrews 11 and explain that even those in the Hall of Faith chapter of the Bible did not know the mystery that was being revealed in this passage.
- Where was it hidden? (v. 9 – in God) If it was hidden in God, who could reveal this mystery? Only God, which is why Jesus

came to show us the mystery.

- Why was it revealed? (v. 10 – So that through the Church, God’s wisdom might be known to all peoples.)
- Who or what is the Church? What does “through the church” mean? (The Gospel moves to people through people.)
- When you have embraced the mystery in faith, you gain access, boldness and confidence. What is the purpose of this boldness?
- Once the mystery is revealed to you, it is like a big game of tag, and now, you are the team of people who get to share it with others. For those who don’t know the mystery, you get to be the first one to share that juicy secret with them.
- Explain to your family that once you know the mystery of the gospel, you are contagious. The Gospel is much like a virus. When you have it, you are infectious. When the gospel is strengthened in you, (v. 16), you more fully understand the magnitude of His great love (v. 18) for you. The natural consequence of walking with Jesus is influence on others.
- How far into the future do you believe your life can continue to have influence on this planet? (See Psalms 78:5-7) How far from this location do you believe the influence of your life can reach? This is a great way for you to talk about your own experience on mission trips, or how someone in your family in generations past has influenced you.

Prayer

Lives/Church

This week, we have been studying Ephesians 3:1-13. We have seen how God is glorifying himself through building a church made up of people from all nations. In light of this reality spend some time thanking God that he has included you in his redeemed people and that he now sends you out with his message of salvation to all nations. Pray that we here at Brook Hills would be faithful stewards of the gospel that has been given to us by declaring and displaying it in Birmingham and in all nations.

Local

Local Church: Dawson Memorial Baptist - Gary Fenton

Focus: Lifeline Children's Services - a Christ-centered adoption service in Birmingham that also gives support to foster care and pregnancy matters.

Monday: Pray for Lifeline's leadership, who work diligently and travel all over the world to advocate and fight for orphans, especially Herby Newell and Dave Wood.

Tuesday: Pray for the children placed in homes through Lifeline, that they would come to know Christ through adoption and orphan care, as well as foster care.

Wednesday: Pray for adoptive parents and foster parents through Lifeline, that they would stay grounded in the Word, as well as remember that they are the hands and feet of Christ to these children.

Thursday: Pray that more Christian families would rise up and respond to the command in James 1:27 in whatever ways it looks like for their own families.

Friday: Pray for protection and wisdom for Lifeline's leadership as the ministry grows and expands, as well as the provisions for that growth, through finances, staff, and even adequate space.

Saturday: Pray that the staff would be continually encouraged to work through the grace of Christ, for the glory of Christ, to display the gospel of Christ in all that they do.

Scripture Memory

"...so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places." Ephesians 3:10

Week 46

Global

Short Term Teams: There are no short-term trips this week.

Partner: Brook Hills' partners Jacob and Allyson serving in Southeast Asia

Monday: Jacob and Allyson hike into difficult areas to engage unreached peoples in Southeast Asia. Pray for God to guide them as they seek people of peace with whom to share the gospel in these villages.

Tuesday: Pray for God to prepare the hearts and minds of men and women to receive the message of the gospel.

Wednesday: There are no known believers in most of the areas Jacob and Allyson are working in. Pray for people to believe in Christ and for the gospel to go forth in these areas.

Thursday: There is great need for more workers to help engage unreached peoples and share the gospel. Pray for workers from Brook Hills to go and help spread the gospel and establish the church where it does not exist.

Friday: Jacob and Allyson trek into difficult areas. Pray for God to sustain them physically, mentally and spiritually as they face great physical labor to engage people in hard to reach areas.

Saturday: Pray for God to strengthen gospel witness when Jacob, Allyson and the other believers they are united with face persecution.

We The Redeemed

by Jill McCloghry

There is nothing like Your love
No exchange for all You gave
To be welcomed into life
So I can know the love that saves

Now forever to belong
To walk with You for all my days
There's no greater love than this
You are the Author and the Way

This is the sound of the redeemed
Rising up to praise the King
Our hope is in You
This is the sound of the redeemed
Rising up to praise the King

Singing glorious glorious
One You have saved us
Honor and Power and
Praise to the Savior
You are the Answer
You are the Answer

You come with power come with fire
As we lift Your name on high
And join with all the saints to sing
In bringing Honor to the King

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